

## Friday Nights by [vanishingbyler](#)

**Series:** [A Very Byler Christmas \(2017\)](#) [2]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Angst with a Happy Ending, Future AU, Lucas & Dustin are mentioned, M/M, Nancy & Holly are mentioned, Set in 1988, Ted & Karen are mentioned, The angst isn't too deep tho

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven, Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2017-12-02

**Updated:** 2017-12-02

**Packaged:** 2022-04-03 05:08:01

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 990

**Publisher:** [archiveofourown.org](#)

**Summary:**

Friday nights were, without fail, spent at Will's house. Mike wouldn't have it any other way.

## Friday Nights

### Author's Note:

This one is more bittersweet than the first, but it's still soft.

02/12/2017.

Friday nights were built around a routine. Mike would go home to the constant bickering of his parents, drop off his school books, and head over to Will's. When he arrived, Joyce would make a snack for the boys (who, being 17, insisted they probably could've made their own) and then Will would go out to walk the dog with Joyce while Mike had a few minutes to call Nancy.

He missed Nancy, more than he expected to. She was entering into her third year of college now, out at Columbia University. He was proud of her, he was, but the house felt so quiet and empty with only Holly's inane little girl babble to fill it. Nancy didn't come home anymore. Not since the Christmas of '86, when Karen and Ted argued so much that Karen actually walked out until the 26th, in Holly was so inconsolable that Nancy had to stay an extra week. Knowing she couldn't fix the problems, she elected to stay out of them instead. Mike wished he had the option.

"Nance, are you coming for Christmas this year?"

"You know I'm not, Mike."

"Please?"

"You'll understand when you're older."

"What is there to understand? Your younger siblings, one of whom is fucking *eight*, listen to Mom and Dad ripping the shit out of each other all the damn time, and you can't stand to be around it for three days out of a year?"

"It's more complicated than that, Mikey."

“No it’s not. Go to Hell, Nance.”

He slammed the phone down harder than he should’ve, considering it wasn’t his, and slid to the floor. He missed her. He missed how things used to be. He missed going to see Will everyday because he cared for him, rather than because of some intense need to avoid his family. He missed being young and carefree, when Holly was his sister and not his responsibility. He missed what things were like when monsters were something he feared hiding under his bed, not something lurking round every corner waiting to hurt his best friend. He missed the great drama of the Wheeler household being that Mike put syrup on scrambled eggs, rather than how his parents were teetering on the edge of divorce, clinging on only for reputation’s sake. He missed the days when school wasn’t just a torturous machine pushing you towards your parents’ dream college. He missed Lucas and Dustin, who were still his best friends, but spent time with other people now, doing other things. He missed when Holly was too young to be aware of the threats posed to her simply by knowing Jane Hopper. He missed it. He missed the past.

Will returned from walking Chester to find Mike on the floor beneath the phone, knees drawn to his chest and tears leaving soaking wet patches on his jeans where he buried his face. This was unusual. This broke routine. Mike was usually happier after a call with Nancy, the pressures of real life lifted just briefly by knowing his sister was doing well, and he’d soon be following in her footsteps.

The easiest thing to do was envelop Mike in a hug. Though he wasn’t a very touchy person, Mike always let Will embrace him because he felt unimaginably safe when the sandy-blond boy was around.

Although not immediately, the contact did help. After a few minutes, the tears cleared up. A couple more after that, and he stopped

trembling. Five more, and he withdrew his legs from his chest, offering a weak smile. A moment later, he hugged back, burying his face in Will's shoulder.

Will smelled like home. The air of freshly baked pancakes and newly washed bed linen clung to him like it'd never let go, and Mike couldn't get enough. There was no smell he found more comforting than that of the boy that had been there for him at every turn since they were barely old enough to understand emotions. A hug from Will was the only way Mike could describe the word *safe*. The actual definition wasn't enough. Nobody could ever know what it meant to be safe until they'd spent a few moments in Will Byers' arms.

Hopper got home shortly after 6, in through the back door carrying bags of takeout. It warmed Mike's heart that there was enough for five.

"Jane, come to the kitchen please, we're all getting fat and talking about our days." Jim called out, walking through to the front of the house and knocking gently on the door that divided her bedroom and the living room.

He entered back into the kitchen and laid out a plate for Jane, himself, Joyce, Will, and *Mike*. Jane joined them a few moments later. Her hair, now long enough to hang well down her back, was secured in a messy ponytail, and she was dressed in a large shirt and sweatpants that had outgrown Will a year or two prior. Mike took notice of how different she was to when they first met. Since living with Hopper (and, later, the Byers'), she was calmer, and happier, and more talkative. She still didn't make casual conversation unless she deemed it absolutely necessary, but she could. And that was amazing.

The family talked over dinner, about how their days went and what school was like at the minute. When dinner was finished, they migrated to the living room so Joyce could remain in the conversation as she set up the tree. They listened when Mike talked, laughed at his jokes, and countered anything he said with insightful debate. This felt like a family.

Much as he missed the past, Mike figured he could put up with the present if his chosen family stayed as it were. If he could spend everyday in the company of these four people in their house that actually felt like a home, he could put up with anything.